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**Public Policy Advocacy Within
Jordanian Business Associations
Final Report
9 January 2006**

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This consultancy focused on two concrete areas: (1) design of an advocacy manual based on international best practices adapted to the Jordanian business association context and (2) delivery of a training on drafting position papers for use in business associations' lobbying efforts. The second objective is drawn primarily from the recommendations of Ed Priola, a previous consultant, who delivered an advocacy training in June 2004. As Mr. Priola cited, "the truth is that these documents ('position papers') are far simpler to generate than the interviewed business association executives actually suppose."

One week prior to the training, this Consultant conducted a training needs assessment in order to determine which skills were lacking in associations' advocacy work.

Jordanian business association leaders display high levels of professionalism, diplomacy and enthusiasm. Many have experienced some degree of success in influencing policy reform efforts and most have easy access to the executive and legislative branches of government. Few interact with the media beyond responding to requests and, with one exception, none have engaged in any serious public awareness efforts. During the interviews, training, and technical assistance, the Consultant encountered a number of deficiencies that were previously cited in the report of Ed Priola (June 2004), such as:

"Business leaders do not appear as immediately effective as they should be given their advantageous positioning" (namely, the favorable environment towards business-related reform efforts that has been created by the King and several Ministers).

"Even the most knowledgeable participants had some deficits regarding advocacy fundamentals."

Overall, it was clear that associations are employing a wide variety of advocacy methods and tactics. However, most efforts are ad hoc, reactive, lacking in a long-term strategy, and disconnected from any systematic assessment of associations' member needs. Even those associations most frequently engaged in advocacy work lack any standardized approach to monitoring and evaluating their efforts. To ensure that business associations and the AMIR team can better chart their progress, record their successes, and learn from the challenges they have encountered, a simple self-assessment tool has been shared.

Given the level of enthusiasm for unplanned action, prior suggestions that business associations should move towards coalition-building on a single advocacy issue are premature. Instead, associations need to create, in as participatory manner as possible, advocacy plans, draft guidelines for their advocacy committees, (re)connect with their members, and engage more sectors of society to take advantage of this opportune moment in time to lead reform efforts.

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Pre-Training Activities

Prior to the Training, the consultant developed a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) to identify the gap between associations' actual knowledge, skills, and attitudes and those needed to be effective advocates (in Appendix). One-on-one interviews were conducted with nine (9) of AMIR's business association partners. In addition to providing a baseline of current advocacy efforts, the interviews ensured that the training would be aimed at the appropriate level for the audience. These interviews also provided an opportunity to capture success stories and ongoing challenges, which were incorporated into the training and the manual, and collect examples of position papers. Furthermore, this baseline can be used by AMIR staff to assess progress made by associations in the future. Individual assessments of each association's advocacy work is detailed in a later section of this report.

Training Methodology

The Public Policy Advocacy Training was a one-day event involving slightly more than two dozen participants. Associations were requested to send advocacy program staff to the first half of the day while the afternoon session was broadened to include Board Members.

9:00 – 10:30	Advocacy Cycle, Role of the Advocate
10:30 – Noon	Drafting a Position Paper (Issue, Research, and Composition)
3:00 – 5:00	Role of Advocacy Committees, Strategic Lobbying, Legislative Services for Members, Presentation of Manual

Observations

The previous consultant noted that attendees sought "all-purpose answers to their questions regarding their individual organizational advocacy scenarios" however this was not associations' primary response during this session. In the intervening year, associations have tried a number of advocacy techniques and have had some notable successes, making them focused on practicalities of implementation.

Unusually, few business association representatives asserted that Jordan is so culturally different that many international lessons of advocacy are inapplicable. During the training, the only participant to raise this critique was a government staff member, who was promptly countered by one association's Board member who asserted that the role of associations was to serve as "agents of change."

As indicated elsewhere, fundamental gaps in knowledge have persisted from the previous training. Most notably, despite what should have been an extensive session on message development delivered by Mr. Priola, associations expressed total unfamiliarity with how to create a message, which represents a significant knowledge and skill gap in advocacy work. The Consultant addressed this issue with individual associations after the training and provided a follow-on training in Message Development to AMIR Communications and Training staff to ensure that associations will have technical support in the future.

Training Impact

Prior to the training, associations' "position papers" read more as legal briefs, stunted sector strategies, negotiation talking points, or public relations materials. Furthermore, associations' lack of understanding of the elements of a "position paper" led to a fear of drafting. Now armed with a simple outline and locally-relevant example, associations should be able to draft stronger papers in the future. Based on the feedback received after the training, most associations are keen to draft these papers in the immediate future.

To measure any behavioral changes resulting from this training, an Impact Assessment is included in the Appendix, which should be delivered by the AMIR team to all associations that participated in the training at three months' and six months' time. Possible impacts include:

Primary Impacts

- Increased number of position papers drafted by associations.
Baseline = 0. JITO's previous papers failed to articulate a position; Int@j has relied on outside consultants to draft.
- Position papers reflect consensus of membership (based on survey/input from members).
Baseline = 1. Int@j surveys its members prior to hiring consultants to draft.

Secondary Impacts

- Increased number of advocacy committees draft written guidelines.
Baseline = 1. Int@j has drafted guidelines (however, they are largely reactive rather than prospective, and do not contain any crisis management components).
- Increased number of advocacy plans drafted by associations which include objectives, targets, indicators, activities, and timeline.
Baseline = 0.
- Associations' advocacy activities include creating new strategic relationships with other associations, the media, public, Parliament, local government, different Ministries, etc.).
Baseline = 2. Both AmCham-Jordan and JIPA have briefed press and Parliamentarians, leading to greater understanding and strategic positioning of their issues.
- Associations' financial sustainability plans include offering advocacy-related services to members; associations "package" advocacy as a member benefit.
Baseline = 0
- Associations create databases that accurately profile their members' impact on society.
Baseline = 0

RECOMMENDATIONS

Many business associations have skipped the basic steps of advocacy and focused only on lobbying. While lobbying may result in favorable treatment on a particular issue, it is not the strategic building long-term relationships that is the hallmark of successful advocacy efforts. Indeed, most Jordanian business associations' lobbying is based on demands made by a small group of persistent members or a pressing crisis that has paralyzed the industry rather than agenda-setting policy reform. Thankfully, many associations have positive ties to the respective ministries and good access to government decision-makers. However, not all Ministries are created equally. Associations have rarely moved beyond their comfort zone of dealing with one Ministry even if that Minister cannot or will not move forward on their issue.

Associations Need to Take a More Systematic Approach to Advocacy.

Many associations have skipped the fundamental steps of advocacy -- identifying the problem, conducting research, and planning -- and have headed directly into the action stage. This approach, however, is a short-term fix for problems that require long-term strategic thinking. Too often, associations are trapped inside the belief that only their solution will work and fail to pursue innovative options, seize opportunities, or build broader alliances that would actually lead to a lasting solution. As a result, their efforts are not advocacy, per se, but rather simply fighting fires and responding to crises. Without a solid plan, it is not surprising that some associations are experiencing feelings of frustration, leading to loss of motivation and momentum.

Clearly, as discussed below, associations use a large number of advocacy tactics but no association has developed a strategic plan for their advocacy work. Future trainings should avoid presenting a laundry list of possible activities and instead focus on building the more basic skills needed. Without mastering these fundamentals, associations will continue to build houses of straw instead of brick. Advocacy involves purposeful, strategic planning to achieve its goal. AMIR program staff should encourage associations to take the time to create plans before they commence any action or rush off to brief a politician. As the first follow-up activity to the training, AMIR staff should examine each association's advocacy plan.

Associations Need Greater Understanding of their Members.

Associations vary widely in size from small (20 members or less) to large operations with over 200 members. While many associations could easily recite their total membership, far fewer knew how many employees their members have, what percentage of the industry they represent, what percentage of the overall economy, annual sales, etc. No association could cite the number of subcontractors (or their employees) employed by their members. Furthermore, no association had made any effort to gather this information. In short, none have created a membership profile. At the most basic level, associations do not have a complete picture of the population they are supposed to serve.

This disconnect between associations' executives and their members has led to feelings of inadequacy and frustration on both sides and has hampered efforts to solicit members' input on key decisions. Furthermore, the lack of member responsiveness means that associations lack proper information upon which they can reliably base their lobbying efforts. Many associations feel compelled to contract outside experts in order to perform what is basic research on their own

industry. Associations need to create individual member's and industry profiles, which will serve as a basis of power and legitimacy when negotiating with policymakers. Without this knowledge, associations cannot serve as legitimate representatives of their members. This data can be gathered through the initial membership application form, updated through periodic surveys, and recorded on a readily-available computer database program such as Microsoft Access.

Finally, membership development activities cannot take place in an environment where Executive Directors find themselves responding to persistent, almost daily demands from Board members. Instead of the standard quarterly meeting, some Boards meet twice a month, crossing a potentially dangerous line into management rather than governance of the association. Associations need to be focused on the needs of their members, not engaging in a call-and-response with their Boards. Understandably, Executive Directors are loathe to alienate such powerful allies and should not be forced between appeasing Board Members and building their membership. Instead, refresher training for Board members and executive staff on their proper roles is recommended, along with conflict resolution training.

Advocacy Services Should be a Source of Revenue.

Many associations are struggling to entice or maintain members. Providing discounts on medical insurance, pensions, discount cards, and services from outside vendors are just some of the proposed sources of revenue. While such affinity benefits are important, most associations have overlooked a far easier source of potential revenue -- advocacy-related services. Expanding the legislative services offered should be part of every association's financial sustainability plan. Legislative research is difficult to conduct in Jordan and information about changes to regulations and laws is closely guarded by policy makers. Associations, therefore, should charge members for legislative tracking, writing position papers, training business lobbyists, mediation of government disputes, or other individualized advocacy-related services.

Future Advocacy Training Should Focus on Advanced Skills and Tailored Technical Assistance. Due to their widely-varying levels of advocacy experience, motivation, and resources, associations are unlikely to benefit further from large-group style trainings. Instead, trainings should involve smaller groups of associations facing similar problems accompanied by technical assistance to address each association's individual needs, such as the training the Consultant delivered to the Boards of IMC and the Jordanian Association of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers. Through periodic impact assessments, AMIR program staff can more accurately pinpoint gaps in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Mechanisms to assist in monitoring and evaluating associations' advocacy work have been incorporated into the manual.

One future advocacy-related training should be in public policy research. Performing legislative research in Jordan is a complex task. Access to legislation is based on social relationships, not freedom of information and political behavior is based on a paternalistic approach to power, with people hoarding information. There are no requirements to seek public input or consult with affected groups when legislation is drafted by the relevant Ministry and deliberations of Parliamentary committees are closed. The Parliament's plenary sessions are not announced in advance and no input is possible -- only passive viewing in the gallery. Government often fails to implement its own laws, forgets to pass needed by-laws or simply makes public declarations which contain sweeping policy changes. As associations' advocacy efforts mature, their

advocacy efforts continue to grow, the demand for greater analytical and research skills will grow commensurately.

Non-Advocacy Training Needs.

Many of the challenges faced by associations in conducting advocacy result from skills deficits in other areas. In particular, EDs/CEOs need to more properly budget their time, delegate responsibility, and manage the expectations of both members and Board Members. All of the associations possess computers equipped with Microsoft Office software, including Microsoft Access, yet none have developed a member, media, or legislator database to keep track of contact information and follow-up needs. Greater skills in planning, negotiations, conflict resolution, and time management would greatly enhance associations' ability to advocate.

INTERVIEWS, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND EVALUATION

Prior to the training, the Consultant conducted on-site interviews with 9 of AMIR's business association partners. During the initial interview, the Consultant used the Training Needs Assessment as a guided questionnaire and inquired about past advocacy efforts, current organizational infrastructure(s) related to advocacy, and any identifiable barriers to advocacy work. When available, the Consultant solicited position papers and advocacy plans written by associations. In the consultations that followed the training, technical assistance focused on drafting (or re-drafting) position papers, reviewing advocacy strategic plans, delivering targeted training to association members, and developing advocacy committee guidelines.

Without exception, association CEOs demonstrated a high level of commitment to their work. All were articulate, savvy, diplomatic and poised. Universally, they cited advocacy as both their biggest weakness and the focus of most of their work. Many expressed frustration at perceived past failures as well as an inability to balance member needs. Few kept track of past successes. Despite the fact that many associations conduct advocacy-related activities (primarily lobbying), these consultations clearly indicated that the fundamentals of advocacy have not been absorbed into each association's ethos.

In recent years, government has become more open to listening to business' needs and concerns, giving associations a unique opportunity to shape policy. Many associations have acted upon their intuitive understanding that they need to build strong ties with their Government counterparts. Jordanian society and culture encourages building mutually beneficial relationships, making lobbying – the search for a “Champion” who will shepherd your proposal through the legislative process -- a natural starting point of their advocacy work. Like associations, few government employees have any experience with future-forward strategic planning. While Ministers' varying degrees of professionalism and frequent changes have given many advocacy efforts a stop-and-go quality, the government's relative lack of skill has allowed several associations to position themselves as experts in their fields.

Unfortunately, most associations' efforts stop and start at the Minister's door. Instead of thoughtfully identifying a problem, conducting research (which includes surveying their members), and planning their tactics (a stage universally skipped) before commencing any action, most associations simply react to pressing situations using whatever approach is nearest at hand, acting like firefighters not advocates. None of the associations use assessment tools of any kind to evaluate their work and incorporate needed changes, making improvement an impossible task. Over the long term, such crisis-bound advocacy will lead to burnout and fatigue.

All of the associations expressed a desire to capitalize on their past work and become more systematic in their approach. During the meetings, associations were encouraged to view advocacy as a cycle that involve their members at every stage. Additionally, associations need to support their legislative Champions by creating messages and media events that capture public attention and by expanding the targets of their advocacy efforts to include Parliament and the media.

Individual Consultations

AmCham-Jordan (Rose Alissi Wazani, CEO).

AmCham-Jordan, the recently re-branded Jordanian American Business Association, has a long history and deep membership. Their CEO is dynamic and very knowledgeable on pressing issues, with strong ties to Jordanian, American, and regional governments and counterparts. Recent awareness-building efforts included a press briefing to educate the media on free trade agreements, which translated into more accurate coverage on this issue. A similar briefing held in November 2004 for Parliamentarians was highly successful. Both events have reinvigorated AmCham's commitment to pursuing legislative changes and positioning itself as an information clearinghouse on behalf of its members.

While AmCham possesses a sophisticated understanding of advocacy, pursuit of any particular policy reform has been on hiatus in favor of efforts to reconnect with members and offer greater benefits. Following the training, the Consultant assisted AmCham's CEO and Board Members in drafting guidelines for their advocacy/public policy committee and revising documents that more clearly delineate members' rights and responsibilities. Once the committee begins meeting, it will be important to ensure that proper planning is conducted before any actions are taken by this energetic group.

Amman World Trade Center (Wael Mihyar, General Manager). In sharp contrast to Ed Priola's report of June 2004 detailing an association primed to take the lead in a business-wide reform coalition, AWTC's current leadership demonstrated little interest in advocacy-related activities and even less inclination to lead any kind of policy coalition. Instead, the new GM is focused on managing the association's income-generating activities and expanding affinity services for members to ensure financial sustainability. AWTC's interaction with the media is primarily passive and though the GM cited some minor snafus with customs agents, no advocacy concerns or challenges were cited.

AE Forum (Hazem Nimry and Maysa Bataineh)

Though nascent, AE Forum brings a wealth of technical expertise and strong government ties through its highly professional and articulate members. Though individual members have solid relationships with policy makers and often serve on public-private reform efforts, the association has no advocacy experience. The association has a number of possible directions for future advocacy efforts – securing greater Government support for R&D, promotion of their profession (especially abroad), and improving city planning mechanisms.

As AE Forum moves forward, they should consider linking their efforts with public awareness campaigns. One examples discussed was sponsoring of public hearings on environmentally- or community-responsive planning, which would help the association secure visibility as a credible expert.

Information Technology Association – Jordan (Int@j) (Bilal Abuzeid, CEO, and Kareina Bakleh, Member Services Officer). At first blush, Int@j's advocacy work appears exceptional. Their advocacy committee is the only one to have written guidelines and their advocacy efforts seem integrated into their overall planning. That said, since Ed Priola's evaluation one year ago,

little has changed in their approach. Int@j's advocacy is still reactive, with members rather than the association taking the lead in identifying problems. Int@j relies on outside experts, primarily lawyers, to compose position papers, which read like legal briefs rather than reflecting industry-wide concerns. Finally, while its publications reflect high-quality desktop publishing skills, the content is public relations-oriented rather than advancing their industry's reform efforts.

Considering their extraordinarily high degree of resources, direct and sustained access to Government, financial support and technical skills, Int@j's advocacy work is lackluster. Members have become used to a high degree of professional services without perceiving any value added. If this apathy persists, Int@j's ability to market advocacy services as part of their financial sustainability package would be impaired. Int@j expressed little interest in reaching beyond their traditional comfort zone to create broader public support, not merely awareness, for their policy reform efforts. Furthermore, Int@j seemed uninterested in building upon their prominent position to interact with different spheres of power, such as the Parliament. While such access may not currently be needed, good advocates cultivate as many positive relationships as possible with all decision-makers. Though Int@j has been fortunate to have solid relationships at the highest level and a stable Minister as a partner, change is one of the few constants in politics. To ensure maintenance of its vaunted position, Int@j should attempt to expand its network of relationships as well as create solid crisis plans before it needs them.

At the follow-up meeting after the training, the Consultant reviewed additional elements that could be incorporated into their advocacy committee's work, such as more proactive efforts and crisis planning. The Consultant also provided an evaluation tool (included in the Appendix of the Advocacy Manual) that will allow Int@j to conduct a self-guided assessment of its advocacy work.

IMC (Fareez Barakat, General Manager)

Though IMC has been a self-sustaining operation for several years, past executives failed to create a strong degree of internal cohesion or set direction for the way forward. Now under new leadership, IMC is busily re-inventing its mission and vision. During the initial interview, a number of tactics to build member confidence and public support were suggested: development of professional standards for management consultants, creation of a code of ethics/conduct, anti-corruption work, etc. Services are a high value export. IMC could position itself as an expert vis-à-vis the government procurement process if it engaged in standardization of the profession, along with discipline of wayward members. Accompanied by a public awareness campaign, such an approach would build greater trust in management consultants' expertise as well as enhance their local and international competitiveness.

As a follow-up consultation, a tailored, abbreviated version of the Public Policy Training was delivered to IMC's President and select Board Members. The General Manager expressed confidence that he would be drafting a position paper in the near future.

Jordan Garments Accessories and Textile Exporters Association (JGATE) (Rashed Darwazeh, CEO).

As one of the largest employers in Jordan, JGATE has incredible potential to influence many policy reform areas regarding wages, international trade, labor standards, etc. In addition to

being a naturally exuberant leader, Rashed Darwazeh does not take “No” for an answer. This tenacity served his association well during last winter’s advocacy campaign. The underlying issue for the association was a desire to contract outside the monopolistic transportation syndicate and use independent contractors to transport their goods. After a carefully orchestrated letter-writing campaign by JGATE’s members, the Ministry of Industry and Trade agreed to JGATE’s demands for flexibility. In response, the transportation syndicate struck back hard, burning tires and threatening violence. Under intense public pressure, the Prime Minister eventually caved into the syndicate’s demands and pressured JGATE’s President to concede some points at a press conference.

While JGATE’s tactics – mobilizing 120 members to fax letters to the Ministry, proactively addressing the media to secure support for the Government’s initial decision – were innovative and effective (Ministry staff kept close track of the daily deluge of letters), their lack of planning may have damaged their ability to achieve similar levels of member involvement in the future. In fact, a foreign garment manufacturer’s association formed shortly afterwards. Without a clear communications plan, most of JGATE’s members learned about their President’s concession through the media rather than from their association. With no crisis response mechanisms in place, decisions were made in an ad hoc rather than strategic manner. In the future, JGATE needs to develop advocacy guidelines and a crisis management plan.

Following the training, the Consultant assisted JGATE and its legal counsel in devising a strategic approach for a pending conflict with the Ministry of Labor and drafting a position paper for delivery to the Minister.

Jordan Inbound Tour Operators Association (JITOA) (Ahmad Al-Bashiti, Executive Director). Though still in the early stages of development, this association possesses a great deal of enthusiasm and eagerness to acquire more technical skills. Along among the associations, they have attempted to draft position papers. While these papers are closer to strategy documents designed for negotiations, they represent real moves forward. Incorporation of JITOA’s views into the National Tourism Strategy – one of the King’s priorities – was an excellent step towards building a solid relationship with the upper echelons of power and positioning themselves as experts in the field. Finally, JITOA is one of the few associations developing a communications strategy, a critical element in raising their profile, attracting allies, and conducting advocacy.

After the training, technical assistance focused on drafting a position paper and discussing strategic next steps for a possible advocacy campaign. JITOA’s desire to pursue potentially controversial reforms in the taxation system will require reaching out to a broad array of stakeholders in order to favorably influence the Ministry of Finance. Similarly, JITOA needs to build an ongoing, productive relationship with other major tourism associations, such as the hoteliers. Of all the associations, JITOA is best-positioned to work in coalition and also has the most immediate need for negotiation skills training.

Jordanian Intellectual Property Association (JIPA) (Rana Diab, Executive Director).

In contrast to the stand-offish attitude towards public outreach displayed by some associations, JIPA has been unusually innovative in its public relations work (sponsoring high school

competitions, IT Week, etc). This hard work has paid off as JIPA is clearly viewed as an industry expert by the Government and increasingly, by the public. Additionally, JIPA has moved beyond mere responsiveness to media requests by delivering press briefings that resulted in improved media coverage of the importance of intellectual property laws in Jordan. Besides AmCham-Jordan, JIPA is the only organization to have forged new strategic legislative alliances by briefing a significant number of Parliamentarians. Finally, JIPA is conducting an overview of current IP laws and will incorporate the results into a policy paper outlining suggested changes based upon their members' experiences with existing laws.

After the training, the follow-up consultation involved reviewing JIPA's proposed changes to its organizational committee structure, which will more fully involve its disparate members into active and meaningful participation in its advocacy work. Ideally, members will support JIPA's work through drafting Op-Eds or visiting Parliamentarians to maintain established ties. Future work could also involve training other associations as well as government in intellectual property issues. Though the new structure will employ a sector-based approach, all sections will have advocacy responsibilities making standardization of advocacy committee guidelines and crisis management critical.

Young Entrepreneurs Association (Laith Al-Qasem President)

In sharp contrast to the last year's assessment of YEA, little about this organization's advocacy work appear to flow smoothly or easily. The lack of an Executive Director could easily explain the difference that a year has made in this organization's advocacy work. While a public policy and advocacy (PPA) committee has existed for several years, the TNA revealed that YEA has no finalized advocacy plan and no record of previous advocacy efforts. Most of YEA's answers to the TNA indicated "Don't know" for key elements such as the number of meetings with government, meetings with Parliament, or media relations beyond drafting a press release. In fact, YEA's respondent claimed that the TNA itself provided some good ideas for future advocacy work.

That said, the PPA members were incredibly responsive to new techniques and eager to learn approaches that could improve their effectiveness. Prior to the training, YEA's draft advocacy plan contained numerous indistinct objectives with no clear timeline or focus. Directly after the Public Policy Training, the lead PPA member created a new advocacy plan using the proffered template, and presented the new plan to the PPA amidst a lively discussion. If the PPA enthusiasm continues, YEA has an excellent chance of developing a more systematized, strategic approach to advocacy that will lead to greater success. An assessment of the new Executive Director's understanding of advocacy should be swiftly conducted in order to assure that the PPA receives the appropriate level of support and guidance.

INTERNAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Create Strategic Alliances with Existing USAID Partners Working in Advocacy

Both Freedom House and NDI provide capacity building related to policy reform efforts in Jordan. During the first week of this consultancy, Freedom House conducted a three-day

advocacy workshop for its civil society partners. Many of the techniques and lessons learned discussed during that training are equally applicable to business associations' work. An informal networking event to share experiences among partners of both AMIR and Freedom House would be beneficial to all.

Similarly, NDI works directly with the Jordanian Parliament, an increasingly powerful institution which is well-equipped – and constitutionally mandated -- to shape legislation and policy in Jordan. On their own initiative, two of AMIR's partners – AMCham-Jordan and JIPA – have already successfully reached out to Parliamentarians to expand their strategic alliances. Not every association possesses similar levels of confidence, however. Working with NDI, AMIR could arrange for other associations' to engage decision-makers through informal networking, briefings, or even mock public hearings.

Involve Communication Staff in Advocacy Trainings. Whenever possible, communications staff should be involved and present during advocacy trainings. Advocacy efforts – which comprise the bulk of associations' day-to-day work – depend heavily on good communications skills and plans. The media relations techniques and technical assistance given by AMIR's communications staff are fundamental components in any advocacy campaign yet the logical linkage between communications and advocacy has not been made internally. During this Consultancy, a half-day training on message development was delivered to AMIR's communications staff to ensure they possess up-to-date skills in order to provide the appropriate technical assistance.

Closer Monitoring and Evaluation of Trainings' Impact. Ideally, trainings act as building blocks that expose participants to new techniques which, over time, are incorporated into the target audience's daily routines. Despite multiple advocacy trainings, no objective evaluation of the skills gained by trainees, through follow-up technical assistance, surveys, testing, or impact assessments, has been conducted. Undoubtedly, demands on program staff precluded fulfillment of this task. Without such critical information, however, designing a follow-on training that effectively closed the gap between the knowledge and skills used in comparison to the knowledge and skills needed without repeating previously-imparted information was virtually impossible.

In the future, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be employed before, during and after any training is conducted. This evaluation should consist of three stages:

- (1) Training Needs Assessment. At the most basic level, a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) examines the gap between skills currently used and skills needed. In consultation with the trainer and based on any previous training given, AMIR staff would create a list of skills that participants should have learned, and then ask potential attendees which skills have and have not been used. This simple assessment can also be used to separate beginners and advanced practitioners on a particular skill or topic, leading to more focused trainings. During this consultancy, one association (YEA) mentioned that “just reading the TNA gave me ideas – like talking to a Parliamentarian -- on how to improve my advocacy”.

- (2) Objective evaluation of short-term knowledge, skills or attitudes gained during the training. All trainings should include a pre- and post-test. Satisfaction surveys do not measure participants' change in knowledge that has been acquired due to the training.
- (3) Impact Assessment. Finally, trainings are ultimately about learning and using new skills. At set intervals, participants should be asked which skills they have incorporated into their work. The Consultant has designed an Impact Assessment which should be delivered by AMIR program staff at an appropriate interval (3 to 6 months).

On-going evaluation of trainings and skills gained by trainees' could easily be incorporated into the routine work of AMIR's Training Unit staff, whose ability to support program staff in the design, delivery, and evaluation of trainings is clearly under-utilized. To increase the Training Unit staff's capacity to assist program staff, the Consultant conducted a half-day training which included how to conduct training needs assessments, test design, and various methods to conduct evaluations – not merely satisfaction surveys – before, during and after any training. Considering the funds and energy spent on trainings, the Training Unit's new expertise in tracking the efficacy of trainings should be used often.

Training-Related Information Should be Relayed in a Timely Fashion. Most of the primary material delivered to the Consultant concerned trainings delivered in 2002, too long ago to be relevant. Documents explicitly mentioned in the Consultant's SOW – the AMIR Technical Proposal – were significantly delayed and others – Larry Milner's Diagnostic Assessment-- simply never materialized. Additionally, as this training built upon the work of a previous consultant, material from that training should have been available as soon as possible (again, a lapse of one week's time occurred). Finally, if a trainer's request for materials to be used during the training cannot be met, then the trainer should be informed. In this instance, several items requested by the trainer one week in advance of the training were not available and no explanation was given.

Similarly, when the audience composition of such a select group of participants is materially changed, the trainer should be notified as soon as possible. At times, trainings understandably attract participants beyond their intended audience (government staff, donors, the media, etc.). In such cases, trainers take special care to ensure that confidentiality as well as consideration of the different viewpoints is maintained. This training was designed based upon in-depth interviews, which were conducted with virtually all participants, and tailored based on people's experiences and expressed opinions on advocacy. Though AMIR program staff were aware that Ministry personnel would be attending the training, such key information was not relayed to the trainer. If the trainer had been made aware of the situation, the trainer would have incorporated the Ministry staff into the strategic lobbying sessions or otherwise taken advantage of this important opportunity.

APPENDIX

TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

As you may know, we are developing a new training offered by the AMIR Program. We request your completion of this questionnaire to help us learn more about your needs and preferences. The information that you and others provide will assist us in our effort to provide high quality services. Your answers will be handled in the strictest confidence and will be tabulated with those of others to determine training needs.

Thank you for your time and assistance in advance.

Name: _____ Association: _____

1a. Please tell us a little about yourself:

Time with your current organization: ___ 1 year or less ___ 2 to 4 years ___ 5 years or more

Employment status: ___ full time ___ part time ___ volunteer

Job title: _____

Primary responsibility:

___ Manager ___ Project Coordinator ___ Member Services Officer

___ Advocacy Officer ___ Administrator

___ Other (please specify): _____

1b. How many people work in your organization as:

- Full-time employees (with insurance and other benefits) _____
- Contracted employees _____
- Staff paid through honorariums _____
- Volunteers _____
- Other: _____

2. Advocacy Motivation and Experience

- a. Does your Association have a strategic plan? _____
- b. If yes, does the strategic plan include any policy reform/advocacy goals, objectives or activities? _____
- c. Does your Association have an advocacy plan? _____
- d. Number of advocacy initiatives the Association has been involved in _____
- e. Number of policy advocacy initiatives resulting in legal change _____
- f. Number of effective watchdog activities conducted by the Association _____

3. Which phrase best describes your association's relationship with local government (choose one):

- a) We are adversarial/hostile
- b) We are friendly in principle but have little contact with each other
- c) We have collaborated on a few projects
- d) We have drafted regulations together or the government has asked our policy advice
- e) We have no relationship with local government officials

Number of meetings with local government in the past year:

Number of joint programs, projects, initiatives:

4. Which phrase best describes your association's relationship with National government (choose one):

- a) We are adversarial/hostile
- b) We are friendly in principle but have little contact with each other
- c) We have collaborated on a few projects
- d) We have drafted laws together or the government has asked us for policy advice
- e) We have no relationship with National government officials

Number of meetings with Jordanian government officials in the past year:

Number of joint programs, projects, initiatives:

5. Which phrase best describes your association's relationship with the media (choose 1):

- a) We are adversarial/hostile
- b) We are friendly in principle but have little contact with each other
- c) We respond to media requests but generally do not initiate contact
- d) We follow a media plan that ensures regular, active contact with the media
- e) We have no relationship with the media

6. In the past year, has your association (please check one box):	YES	NO
Set goals and objectives for an advocacy campaign		
Conducted a public opinion survey		
Drafted a public policy research paper		
Met with a Parliamentarian		
Created a media event that publicized your advocacy campaign		
Been interviewed in the media		
Distributed a flyer, brochure or newsletter to the public		
Drafted and sent out a press release		
Held a press conference		
Formed or joined a coalition with other groups with similar aims		
Drafted a position paper		
Drafted legislation or regulations		

If you answered YES to any question above, please describe:

7. Which skills are the most important for the leader of an advocacy campaign? PICK 5

Working with Media	Coalition building	Networking	Access to lawmakers
Conflict resolution	Strategic planning	Fundraising	Knowing legislative process
Drafting legislation	Time Management	Negotiation	Identifying Target Audience
Message development	Presentation skills	Lobbying	Setting Goals and Objectives

8. In which skills do you or your staff members need more training? PICK 5

Drafting legislation	Time Management	Negotiation	Identifying Target Audience
Message development	Presentation skills	Lobbying	Setting Goals and Objectives
Working with Media	Coalition building	Networking	Access to lawmakers
Conflict resolution	Fundraising	Strategic planning	Knowing legislative process

9. Consider the training programs that you prefer. What makes them appealing to you?

10. Consider training programs in the past that have been less helpful. What has made them less valuable for you?

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Thank you for your time.

THREE-MONTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Re: Public Policy Advocacy Training
(Victoria Ayer, July 19, 2005)

PLEASE RESPOND BY: October 1, 2005

As part of Amir's efforts to provide technical assistance and improve our responsiveness to your training needs in the future, we would appreciate your response to this brief survey. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

1. Name one new skill or idea from the training that you now use on a regular basis at work:
2. Name one new skill you learned during the training or the consultations you would like to use but need more training to feel comfortable in doing it well:
3. Have you established an advocacy committee – OR – if you already had an advocacy committee prior to the training, what, if anything, does it do differently as a result of the training?
4. Have you written a position paper based on input from your members? If not, why not?
5. Have you developed any new advocacy or legislative services for your members? If not, why not? What other resources do you need?
6. What one skill did you learn that you WOULD use if you had more or different resources?
7. Any other comments:

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR REPLY